

## When racists shout 'Go home,' and you come from 15 places, what to do?

By Hugh Muir, *The Guardian*, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026

When a lieutenant of Nigel Farage suggests, without condemnation from Reform, that David Lammy, the deputy prime minister and justice secretary, “should go home to the Caribbean”, one is tempted to look at that askance. But then, in the year just past, when bigotry in frontline politics took off its training wheels and othering became the sport that everyone can play, the notion that someone who clearly belongs here should not belong here ceased to shock.

Bad stuff happened in 2025. The big stuff you know: the violent, toxically nativist besieging of asylum seeker hotels and the condoning of it by rightwing politicians and media outlets. The deployment up and down the country by hard-right activists of the British and St George’s flag, as a symbol, not of collective adhesion (as it surely can be) but of intimidation.

But I’m also thinking of less high-profile stuff. Like the student who, along with his father, entered a pub in the West Country and was advised to leave because it wasn’t a good or safe place for “Pakis”. [...]They were acting as if they belong, with infinite justification. They were given reason to doubt. Diehard populists and racists want that kind of Britain and they’ve had a good year. According to a new study by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), the number of people absorbing and mirroring hard right narratives is rising. Time to take stock: divided, resentful, hostile to all but a default culture – is that the sort of country the rest of us want?

Against this backdrop, and at a time when a small but growing minority says you have to be white to be British, I have been thinking about minority belonging and attachment. I was born here, schooled here, have worked and paid taxes here, have served communities: but as the son of Windrush parents, how solid is my footing here?

We are settled, but never quite cosy. How can we be? Earlier this year, research by the Runnymede Trust suggested that 9 million people – mainly those with dual nationalities – are vulnerable to losing the citizenship they thought was theirs, with minority citizens 12 times more vulnerable than white. This is us: you belong until, maybe, one day, you don’t.

Go home, Farage’s man said. In the 50s and 60s, my parents’ generation of migrants used to hear that a lot too. But then, as now, it was a nonsense. Home to where? Where you have lived the longest? To your last port of call? To wherever will have you? We don’t know.

Where am I from? Where’s home if not here? This year, having paid the fee and explored my DNA, I’ve found there is a viable case that home could be a lot of places. Via Mum, according to the Ancestry results, there are traces from Benin and Togo, with a good bit of Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana, a smidgen of Nigeria, a little bit of Mali and a sliver of north-east Scotland. There’s even a drop of Iceland. Go figure.

From Dad, again a mix: a chunk of Devon and Somerset, a little bit of Cameroon and Mali. Some Senegal, some Panama and Costa Rica. And then a trace of the Netherlands. Well, I do enjoy trips to Rotterdam.

I find all this energising, and certainly it challenges the idea that we are identity parcels labelled from one destination, ready to be returned to sender.

I am not a citizen of nowhere, as demonised by the populists, but through history, politics, cruelty and happenstance, a creature from almost everywhere. My guess is that many of you are the same – and that David Lammy is similar, too.

That’s the truth of it, and a conversation about home and belonging that starts from there would undoubtedly be more positive. Let’s have it.